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AUTHOR Burgess, Joanne
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the mini-course described in this training manual is to provide parents with information and techniques that emphasize the importance of reading to children and to increase their proficiency in handling the task. The manual includes descriptions of the complete course, its objectives, recommended readings, lists of handouts and teaching aids, and its various sessions. Copies of the slides and transparencies used in the course are also included. (FL)

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READING TO CHILDREN: ONE IN A SERIES OF PARENT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

A Mini-Course

Joanne Burgess, Ph.D.

University of Maine at Farmington

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Trainer's Manual

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PREFACE

Mini-courses were developed by university professors for use with teachers in the field. They are intended to be delivered on site in school districts and may be taught by school-based people who have received prior training. A mini-course is a one credit course which develops specific skills and knowledges related to improving classroom instruction. It is a three stage learning activity! Stage one involves readings, independently done, usually prior to the first session. These readings develop understandings central to the course topic. Stage two is direct instruction, requiring eight to ten hours of contact time.

The number of sessions varies depending on the content of a particular mini-course, the instructor, and the participants. A variety of instructional activities are used to help the participants relate content to their actual work situations. Stage three is an application stage in which participants apply the skills acquired in their classrooms. Follow-up with the instructor completes the mini-course. Upon completion, participants receive one Continuing Education Unit which is applicable for recertification.

The Mini-course Project was sponsored by the Department of Special Education and the Teacher Corps Project at the University of Maine at Farmington.

Project Staff: Dr. Margaret Arbuckle, Dr. Raymond Glass, Ms. Betsy McElvein

June 1979

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This Trainer's Manual includes an abstract of the Mini-course, sessions, descriptions and assignments. Copies of the slides and transparencies, readings, handouts and the actual slides and transparencies are available from:

The Mini-Course Project
Dr. Raymond Glass
University of Maine
Farmington, Maine 04938

(207) 778-3501

These materials were prepared under the Bureau of the Educationally Handicapped Contract Number 451AH60892 and Teacher Corps Contract Numbers G007700127 and G007700128.

ABSTRACT

The significance of reading to young children cannot be emphasized too strongly. This mini-course is to provide parents with information and techniques which will emphasize the importance of reading to children and increase their proficiency in handling the task. Participants will learn skills and techniques to enhance readiness and select appropriate materials for a particular child.

PARENT TRAINING PROGRAM

I. Introduction of Parent Training Program

A. Rationale: The major thrust of this series of workshops, of which this mini-course is only one of eight, is to improve cognitive and language development in preschool children through intervention. The program is based on the research findings of major psychologists that the preschool environment of the child is of crucial importance in his cognitive development. The amount of stimulation that the child receives during this period is influential in this development. The parent training program reflects the following philosophies: The Piagetian belief that a child moves along a particular continuum, Bruner's assumption that a child can be moved along the continuum more rapidly by providing the child with problems that urge him into the next stages of development, Hunt's belief that stimulation must be present at the critical time, Ilg and Ames' belief that the child develops in an individual manner.

Research indicates that emphasis in early childhood education is being placed on parent intervention programs to help alleviate potential deficits. This being the case, local schools should assume some of the responsibility for helping preschoolers meet success when they arrive at school. Since parents are usually the key agents in the child's development, it is important to teach them through parent education programs to create or improve learning atmospheres for children during the early years and thus increase the child's readiness for school. This task might be accomplished by making the training program for preschool parents a component of the school system's educational servies.

Finally it should be noted that the parent training program focuses on parent-child interaction with specific emphasis on language and cognitive development of four year olds. Content of the program is research based.

B. General Overview: The training program for parents of preschoolers can be divided into eight workshop sessions. Attached is a total list of the workshop series and a description of each. The aim of the workshop series is to provide parents with information, techniques, and teaching skills to better enable them to work with their children at home with appropriate games and activities. Each session includes a sharing period, informational period, and activity period. From this point, each workshop will be considered as an individual module or mini-course. It is recommended that the workshops be initiated at a rate of one per month with a follow up session in between.

WORKSHOP 1: READING TO CHILDREN

I. Introduction

A. Overview: As research has indicated quite clearly the importance of reading to children cannot be emphasized too strongly. The purpose of this workshop is to provide parents with information and techniques which would emphasize the importance of reading to children and to increase their proficiency in handling the task. Books are used as a vehicle throughout this workshop series for creating an atmosphere for enjoying literature and for developing readiness for later experiences. Since the workshop series places emphasis on cognitive and language skills, attention is given at the beginning of this workshop to the "total" picture of school readiness.

B. Specific Objectives:

1. Given general information on the importance of readiness, the parents will find time to interact with the children on a daily basis.

2. Given a demonstration on how to read a story, the parents will be able to read a story to the children at home with the right expression and fluency.

3. Given information on how to select a book, the parents will select an appropriate book to read to the children at home.

4. Given information about the importance of reading to children, the parents will read to the children from ten to fifteen minutes each day.

5. After participating in rhyming and finger play activities, the parents will use these techniques with the children at home.

6. After being shown how to increase the child's awareness of books, the parents will teach the children that books have a top and bottom, front and back and left to right progression of words.

7. Given information about the library, the parents will take the children to the library and help them to choose books.

C. Readings: Once a group of interested parents have been determined, readings can be recommended and provided to parents. However, at this initial session, it would be difficult to predetermine the participants. At the close of the first workshop session, parents will be provided with two readings:

1. The Home and School Institute, Success for Children Begins at Home: Reading, Washington, D.C.: Home and School Institute, Inc., 1974.

2. White, Burton L., The First Three Years of Life, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975. (Chapter IX).

D. Handouts:

1. Monroe and Rogers, Stages of Pre-Reading
2. Collection of Finger Plays and Rhymes
3. Collection of Finger Plays
4. Reading to Children
5. Bibliography of Children's Books
6. A Child's Plea to His Parents
7. Guidelines to Work With Child at Home

E. Teaching Aids:

1. Overhead Projector
2. Cassette Tape Recorder
3. Slide Projector

II. Main Session: This session should be approximately two and a half to three hours long and should be conducted at a convenient time for parents. This can best be determined by sending a questionnaire to the homes of parents of preschoolers. (An example of a letter is attached to this mini course).

A. Introduction:

B. Sharing Period: The first half of each session will be utilized for parent discussions and evaluations of the previous workshop. However, since this procedure can't be followed for the first workshop, time will be alloted in the following manner:

1. General welcoming and getting acquainted.
2. Show transparency #1

OVERVIEW
OF
PROGRAM

(Omit if only using the unit for one session)

Discuss the purpose and content of each workshop.

3. General discussion of readiness.
Show slides #2-13 using the following text:

Text for School Readiness

1. Getting ready for school

2. What do we mean by readiness?

3. You already know something about readiness.

4. There is readiness for solid food, readiness for walking...

5. Readiness for sitting up and crawling, readiness for toilet training.

6. When you live with children, you constantly have your eyes open for the right moment.

7. In infancy, in the preschool years, on into adolescence, adults face everlasting questions: Has the youngster grown enough? Has he lived long enough? Is he mature enough now? Is this the right moment? The one word readiness sums this all up.

8. Readiness means that the child has developed so that the required thinking power, memory power, seeing power, muscle power--whatever the job takes--are his. Readiness means--Now the child is in the position to learn. Earlier was too soon--Earlier he couldn't. But now the child is ready. We can teach and he can learn.

9. Is your child physically ready? The school nurse will check your child's vision and hearing during the first part of the kindergarten year and the school doctor will give him an examination. However, if you should suspect a problem in any of these areas, don't wait, but take the child to your family physician before he starts school. An untreated eye or ear problem could greatly affect your child's

PARENT TRAINING WORKSHOP SERIES

WORKSHOP 1: READING TO CHILDREN

THIS WORKSHOP PROVIDES PARENTS WITH INFORMATION AND TECHNIQUES WHICH EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF READING TO CHILDREN.

WORKSHOP 2: STIMULATING ORAL LANGUAGE

THIS WORKSHOP IDENTIFIES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP AND INCREASE THE CHILDREN'S VOCABULARY AND VERBAL FLUENCY.

WORKSHOP 3: THE MAGIC BOX

IN THIS WORKSHOP PARENTS WILL BE SHOWN HOW TO CLASSIFY, COMPARE AND SEQUENCE OBJECTS ACCORDING TO SIZE, COLOR, SHAPE AND TEXTURE.

WORKSHOP 4: THE MAGIC FILE BOX

THE PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP IS THE SAME AS WORKSHOP 3 EXCEPT THAT AT THIS POINT THE CHILD WILL BE WORKING WITH PICTURES AND WORDS.

WORKSHOP 5: USING THE EYES

IN THIS WORKSHOP PARENTS WILL BE TAUGHT TO DEVELOP THE CHILDREN'S AWARENESS OF THEIR BODIES -- THE PARTS, THEIR FUNCTIONS, AND THE CONCEPT OF LEFT AND RIGHT.

WORKSHOP 6: USING THE EARS

THIS WORKSHOP HELPS PARENTS TEACH CHILDREN TO LISTEN.

WORKSHOP 7: NUMBER CONCEPTS

THIS WORKSHOP HELPS PARENTS TO BE AWARE OF THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES IN THE HOME TO TEACH THE CHILDREN BASIC NUMBER CONCEPTS.

WORKSHOP 8: WRITING STORIES

IN THIS WORKSHOP PARENTS WILL BE TAUGHT TO CORRECTLY MAKE THE UPPER AND LOWER CASE LETTERS SO THEY COULD BEGIN WRITING THE WORDS, SENTENCES AND STORIES THEIR CHILDREN DICTATE.

readiness to learn.

10. A child needs to know important things about himself. For example, he should know his full name, his address (street and number), his age, his birthdate, the town and state he lives in, etc.

11. Is your child socially and emotionally ready? Is he timid and afraid when meeting new people? Does he play well with other children? The healthy child must break away from his mother. He must get to know himself as a person apart. He must also have a good feeling about himself. Parents need to build up a child's self-image. An understanding smile tells him that mistakes are a part of growing up and an accepted way of learning. A child needs to be provided with a wide variety of experiences in working out his own ways of solving problems with people and with things. Kindness, courtesy, and responsibility will be learned most readily from an example set by an adult than by all the words they hear.

12. A child needs to develop a sense of responsibility--a sense of self-worth. Give him daily responsibilities such as feeding the fish and picking up his own toys.

13. It's often easier for busy parents to help the child tie his shoes, zip his jacket, or button his shirt, but part of getting him ready for school is helping him to become more independent. How proud he is when he can manage these tasks alone.

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4. Show transparency #2

GUIDELINES
FOR WORKING
WITH CHILD
AT HOME

(See attached sheet of guidelines.)

C. Informational Session: Reading to children

This portion of the workshop deals with information and techniques of "Reading to Children" and is directly related to the objectives.

1. Present slides 62-68 which leads into the importance of reading in the home. The leader may use the following script:

---

62. How can you foster reading readiness?

63. You can take advantage of the many signs in the environment. When you're walking with your child or riding in the car, look for road signs. He will begin to see that written symbols have a meaning.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH THE CHILD AT HOME

1. INTRODUCE SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES ONLY WHEN THE CHILD IS READY. READINESS IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER.

2. SPEND AT LEAST FIFTEEN MINUTES EACH DAY WITH THE CHILD ON ONE OR MORE OF THE ACTIVITIES.

3. A FEW MINUTES OF INSTRUCTION AT A TIME IS RECOMMENDED RATHER THAN A LONG PERIOD ONLY ONCE A DAY.

4. ACTIVITIES FOR THE CHILD SHOULD BE FUN. STOP IMMEDIATELY IF THE CHILD TIRES OR APPEARS FRUSTRATED.

5. KEEP A DAILY LOG OF AMOUNTS OF TIME SPENT EACH DAY WITH THE CHILD, THE ACTIVITIES TAUGHT, AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACTIVITIES.

64. There are many opportunities in the home to help him see that words have meanings. Cereal boxes have writing, the jam jar has a jam lable on it. As he recognizes the jam jar, he will learn that the word jam is written there and he can read it.

65. One of the best ways to foster reading readiness is to show that you consider reading to be an important part of your life by having books, magazines, and newspapers in your home.

66. It is further important for the child to see other members of the family reading. A child loves to imitate adults. What they feel is important, also becomes important to the child. But perhaps the single most important way to create reading interest is to read to your child. Read everyday to him. This cannot be emphasized enough. Children find the world so full of busy people--later--I haven't time now--But please take the time to read to him.

67. Another way to encourage reading interest is to help him build his own library of books.

68. TV can be a good teacher. Children can pick up a large vocabulary of sight words from watching such programs as Sesame Street, Captain Kangaroo, Electric Company, Mr. Rogers, etc.

---

2. Present transparency #3 with the following information and discuss with parents:

HOW TO
SELECT
BOOKS

1. Will the book appeal to a four year old? (Through the age of five, children enjoy stories in a family setting whether it has human or animal families. Picture books about real things such as fire engines, boats and trucks are also popular.)

2. What kind of story does the child like? (Some children like funny, silly stories about things they've done themselves. Some like make-believe stories, while others enjoy true stories. Try to choose a variety.)

3. What are the child's interests? (Children change from day to day as they have new experiences. If the child has a pet, you might select a book on pet care.)

HOW TO SELECT BOOKS

1. WILL THE BOOK APPEAL TO A FOUR YEAR OLD?

2. WHAT KIND OF STORY DOES THE CHILD LIKE?

3. WHAT ARE THE CHILD'S INTERESTS?

4. HOW LONG WILL THE CHILD PAY ATTENTION?

5. IS THE BOOK TOO LONG?

6. ARE THE PICTURES ATTRACTIVE?

7. WILL THE CHILD UNDERSTAND THE STORY?

HOW TO SELECT BOOKS

1. WILL THE BOOK APPEAL TO A FOUR YEAR OLD? (THROUGH THE AGE OF FIVE, CHILDREN ENJOY STORIES IN A FAMILY SETTING WHETHER IT HAS HUMAN OR ANIMAL FAMILIES. PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT REAL THINGS SUCH AS FIRE ENGINES, BOATS AND TRUCKS ARE ALSO POPULAR.)

2. WHAT KIND OF STORY DOES THE CHILD LIKE? (SOME CHILDREN LIKE FUNNY, SILLY STORIES ABOUT THINGS THEY'VE DONE THEMSELVES. SOME LIKE MAKE-BELIEVE STORIES, WHILE OTHERS ENJOY TRUE STORIES. TRY TO CHOOSE A VARIETY.)

3. WHAT ARE THE CHILD'S INTERESTS? (CHILDREN CHANGE FROM DAY TO DAY AS THEY HAVE NEW EXPERIENCES. IF THE CHILD HAS A PET, YOU MIGHT SELECT A BOOK ON PET CARE.)

4. HOW LONG WILL THE CHILD PAY ATTENTION? (THIS DEPENDS ON THE AGE, HOW GOOD THE BOOK IS AND HOW WELL YOU READ TO THE CHILD. BETWEEN TEN TO FIFTEEN MINUTES WILL PROBABLY BE PLENTY OF TIME.)

5. IS THE BOOK TOO LONG? (VERY YOUNG CHILDREN MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY REMEMBERING WHAT HAPPENED IN THE STORY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. THEY MAY NEED A STORY THAT CAN BE COMPLETED IN ONE SITTING OR BOOKS WITH MANY STORIES ABOUT THE SAME CHARACTERS.)

6. ARE THE PICTURES ATTRACTIVE? (COLORS SHOULD BE VIVID AND PICTURES SIMPLE.)

7. WILL THE CHILD UNDERSTAND THE STORY? (THIS USUALLY DEPENDS UPON THE EXPERIENCE BACKGROUND. STORIES SHOULD BE ABOUT FAMILIAR HAPPENINGS, HAVE A SIMPLE PLOT, AND HAVE FEW CHARACTERS.)

4. How long will the child pay attention? (This depends on the age, how ggod the book is and how well you read to the child. Between ten to fifteen minutes will probably be plenty of time.)

5. Is the book too long? (Very young children may have difficulty remembering what happened in the story over a period of time. They may need a story that can be completed in one sitting or books with many stories about the same characters.)

6. Are the pictures attractive? (Colors should be vivid and pictures simple.)

7. Will the child understand the story? (This usually depends upon the experience background. Stories should be about familiar happenings, have a simple plot, and have few characters.)

3. A series of transparencies (#4, 5, 6) will then be shown to demonstrate the following points.

   a. The child should sit close enough to see the pictures to help hold the book.

   b. The parent should point to things in the picture to draw the child's attention to the meaning of words. She should also use her fingertips to glide from left to right as she reads the words.

   c. The child should turn the pages. This helps him to learn that a book is read from left to right.

4. A demonstration of how to read to children will be presented to parents utiliz ing the preceding techniques.

5. Distribute two handouts of rhymes and fingerplays. Discuss the following points:

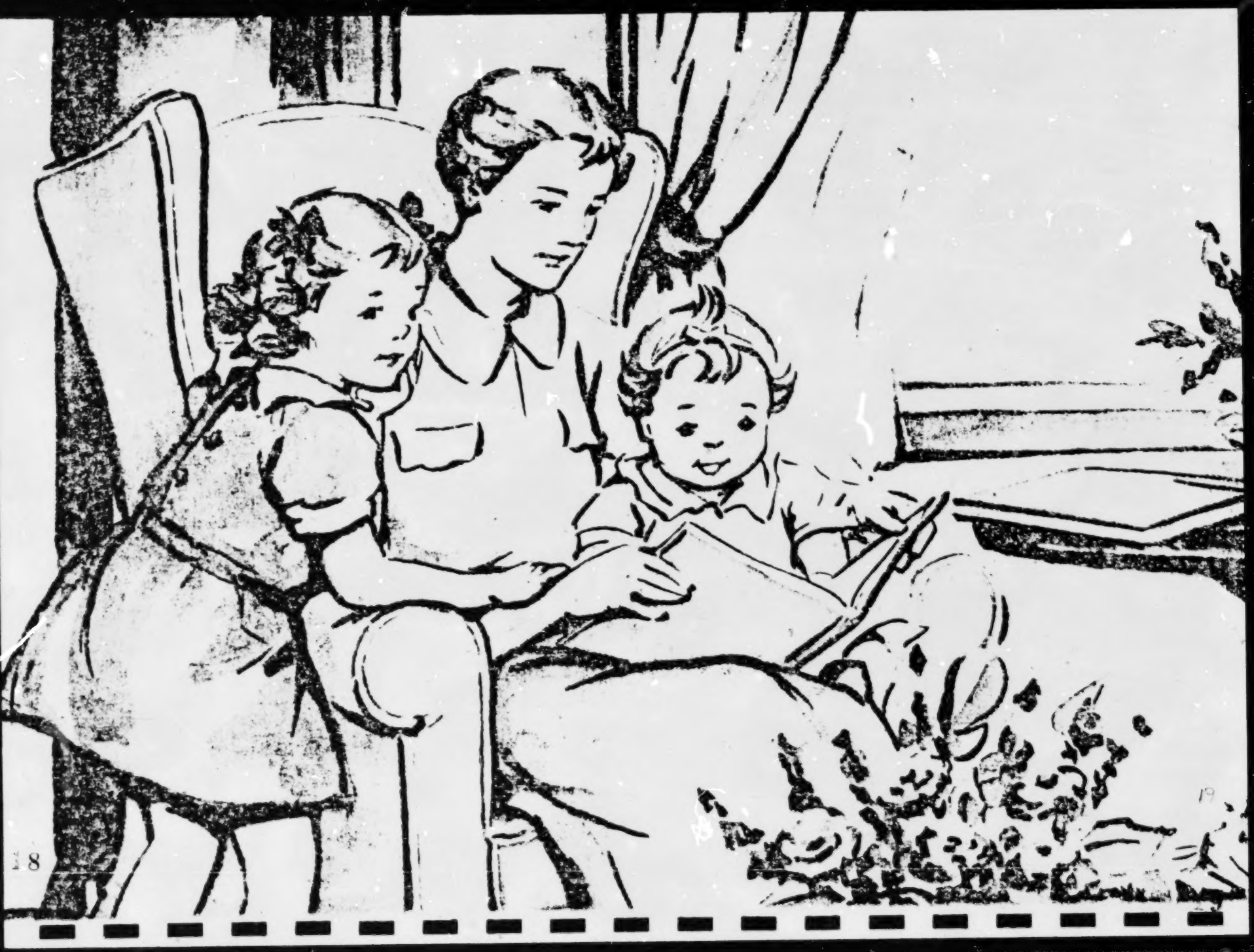
   a. As well as reading stories to children, four year olds also enjoy listening to records and rhymes.

   b. They also enjoy rhythmic games.

   c. Children at this age like silly talk and exaggerat on.

   Follow the discussion by demonstrating a few fingerplays with parents participating

6. Conclude the informational segment of the workshop by providing information about the services available at the local public library. Urge parents to take their children to the library for story hours and allow them to select books to take home.



D. Activity Period: The activity period is designed so that parents may utilize the information presented in the workshop with the child at home. Two activities are planned for this session.

1. Using the guidelines for selecting books, parents will be given the opportunity to select appropriate books for their children. An extensive collection of books for preschoolers should be established as a lending library and should be available throughout the sessions. If such a collection is not possible, then available resources at the public library should be tapped. Parents will be urged to read the books themselves before reading to the children and will be reminded to follow the demonstration example for oral reading.

2. For the second activity, parents will create a soft, furry hand puppet from materials and patterns provided at the work shop. The purpose of this activity is to further stimulate the children's interest in the story by manipulating the puppet as the story is read to the children.

III. Home Project

The parents have been provided with information, techniques and demonstrations related to "Reading to Children." They have also been prepared through a "hands on" activity session to apply their newly acquired skills to a real situation working with their children at home. Parents are urged to use the guidelines established at the beginning of the session. Parents will be provided with the two readings mentioned in the outline. These readings will be the stimulus for further discussion.

IV. Session II

This session will last three hours one or two weeks after the initial session.

A. Sharing Period: Foundations of Reading and Writing, Campus Film Distribution Corp., 2 Overhill Road, Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583, $25 rental. The first half of the session, parents will discuss successes and problems in working with their children on the home assignment. The assigned readings will also be discussed during this sharing period.

The readings were selected because of their focus on relevant issues related to successful home experiences. Examples of discussion topics may be very relevant to parents from their readings are:

1. Should I teach my child to read?
2. How do I know when my child is ready to read?
3. What method will the school use to teach my child to read?

B. Informational Period: In the first session, parents were provided with a basic demonstration of how to read to children. In this session parents will be shown ways to increase the child's familiarity with the language of books. For this purpose books such as "The Little Gingerbread Boy" and "The Sky is Falling on Henny Penny" using either a repetitive or cumulative pattern are appropriate. The following steps are used:

1. Read the story to the child in the same manner as suggested in the first workshop session.
2. Reread the story encouraging the child to join in on the repetitive phrases.
3. Allow the child to retell the story or parts of the story if he/she so chooses.
4. After the child is familiar with the story (this varies with each child), the parent rereads the story stopping at specific points allowing the child to supply (read) the missing word.
5. Some children may wish to reread the story with assistance from the parent. Children should not be urged to move up to this step.

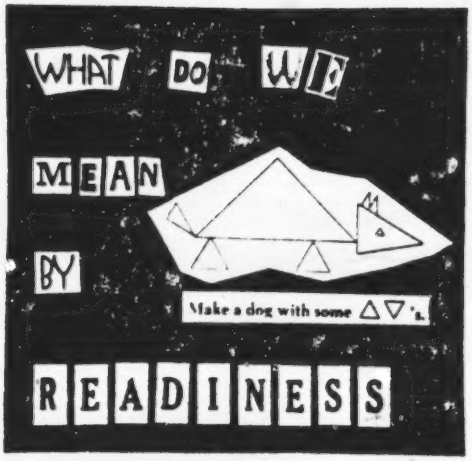
C. Activity Period: Parents will be assisted in selecting an appropriate book with either a repetitive or an accumulative pattern. When collecting a library of books for preschoolers, care should be taken that books using these patterns are included. Again, parents will be urged to read the books themselves before reading to the children and to follow the general guidelines of working with children at home. A quick review at this point might be necessary.

D. Home Project: Using the five steps of assisted reading as a general guide, parents will initiate this activity with their children at home. The parents will be reminded that some children need several experiences with steps one and two before they can either enjoy or be successful with steps three and four. Time is not a critical element.

V. Follow Up Session: (2 hours)

Approximately one month after the second session, parents will meet for a follow up or a rap session. At this time, parents will again share their experiences in working with their children at home. As a culminating activity for the unit, the film "Foundations of Reading and Writing" will be shown to the parents. The film may be either purchased or rented from: Campus Film Distributor's Corp., 2 Overhill Road, Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583, $25 rental, $325 purchase.

COPIES OF SLIDES



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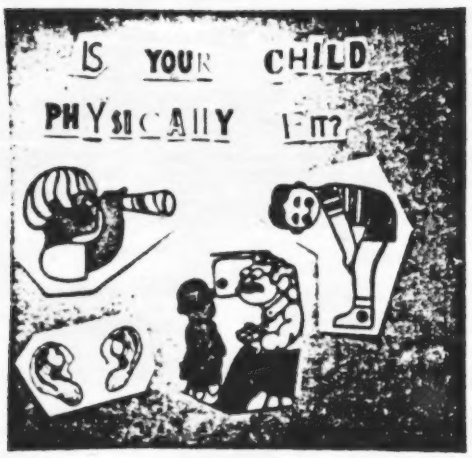

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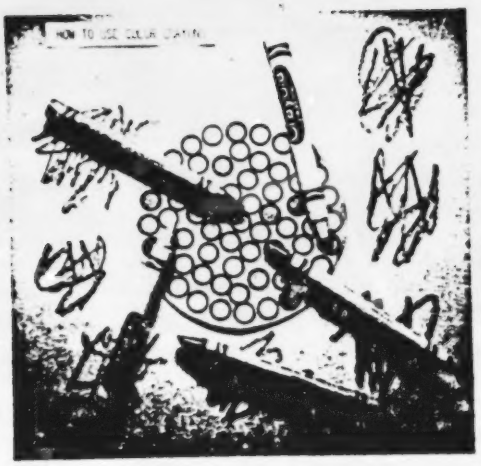

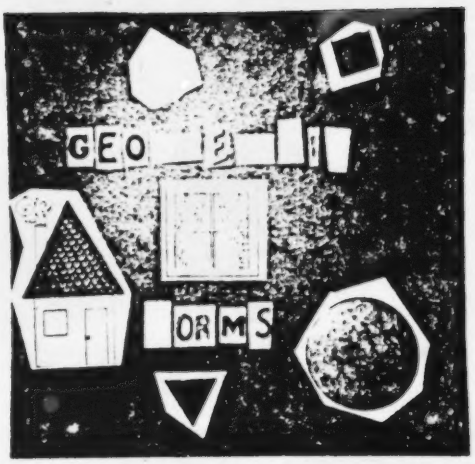

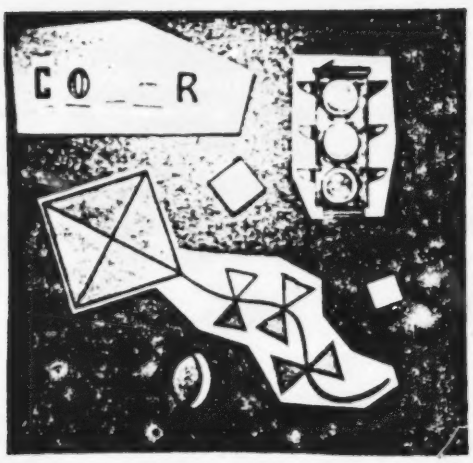

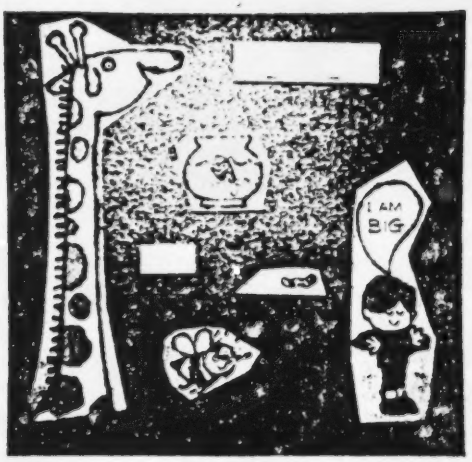

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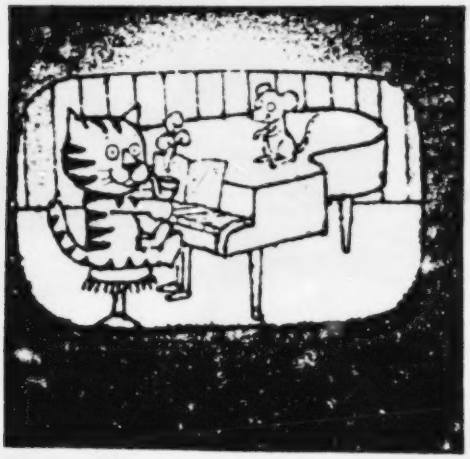
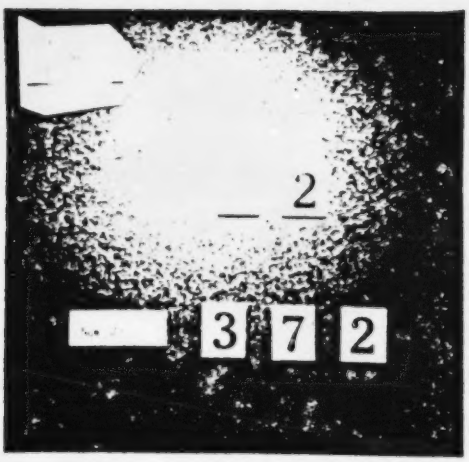
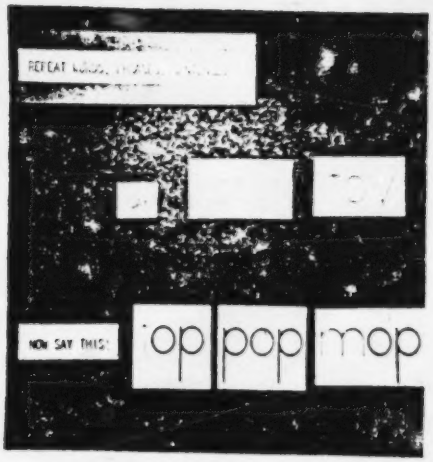
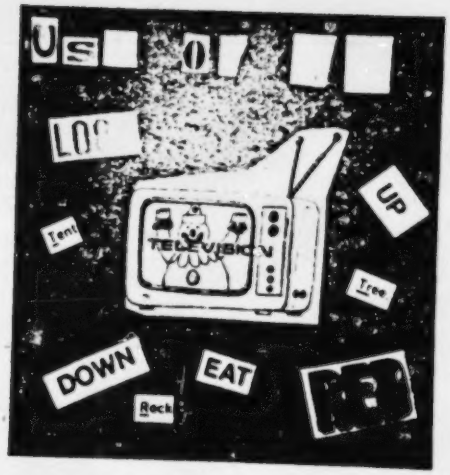






MY
BOOKS
MAKE-BELIEVE ANIMAL TALES


UP
Tent
Tree
DOWN
EAT
Rock

CREATIVE
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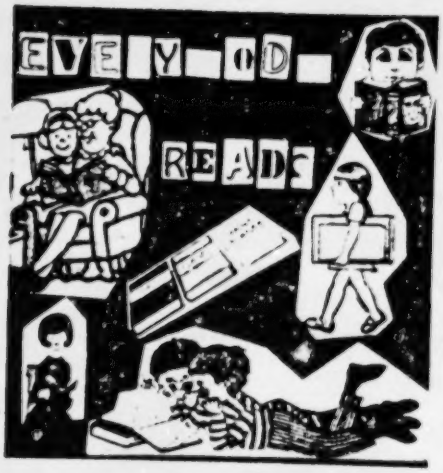
MOVIES

PASTE

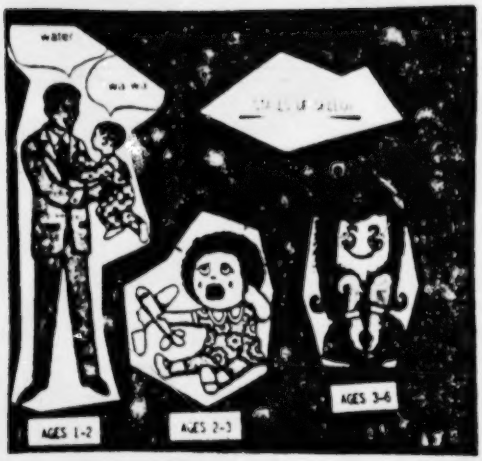
WHAT
A I
READY
OR ?

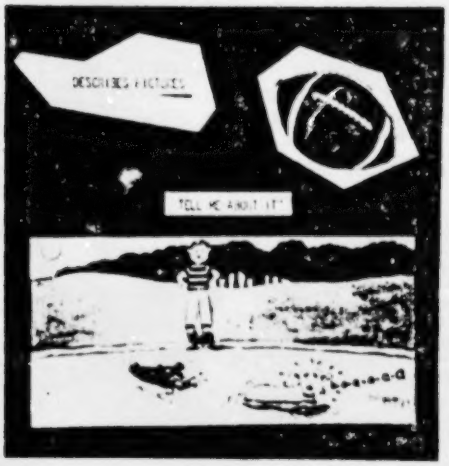
FOR

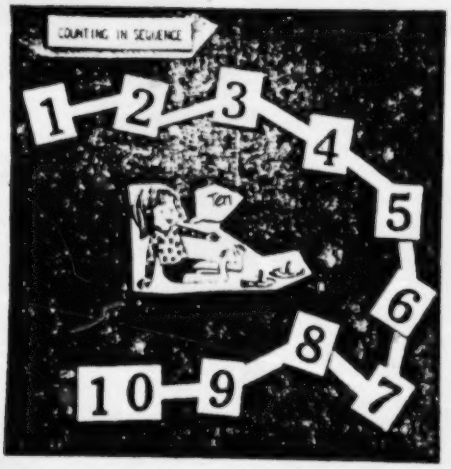
STOP
NO PEDESTRIANS OR BICYCLES
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE
DETOUR
WALK


READS

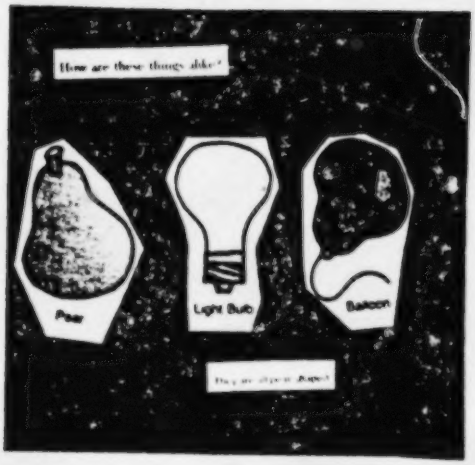
COPIES OF SLIDES

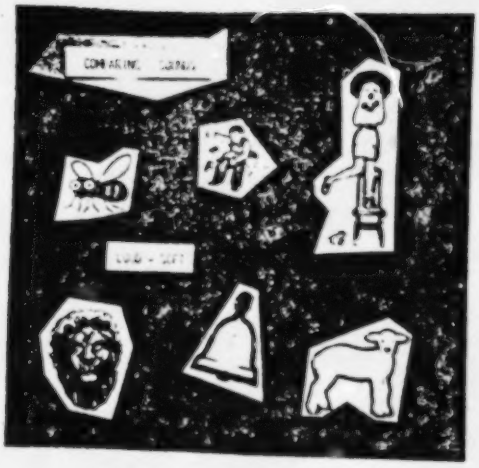


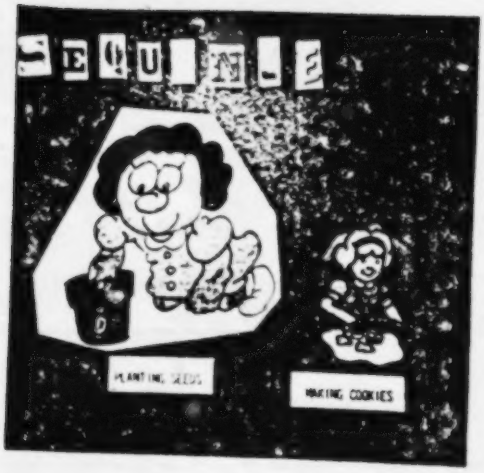




NIGHT
AND
DAY


How are these things alike?
Pear
Light Bulb
Balloon




SEQUENCE
PLANTING SEEDS
MAKING COOKIES

"PUT THE BREAD ON THE TABLE."
"PICK UP THE PENCIL AND BRING IT TO MOMMY."

COPIES OF SLIDES

LISTING OF READINGS AND HANDOUTS

I Transparencies (6)

II Reading: An Introduction to the Approach and Activities of the HSI "Success for Children" Program (13)

III An Overview of Educational Developments During the First Three Years of Life (15)

IV Appendix A: Stages of Pre-reading (3)

V A Collection of Finger Plays and Rhymes (12)

VI Collection of Finger Plays

VII Reading to Children (2)

VIII Suggested Good Books (6)

IX A Child's Plea to His Parents

X Guidelines to Work with Child